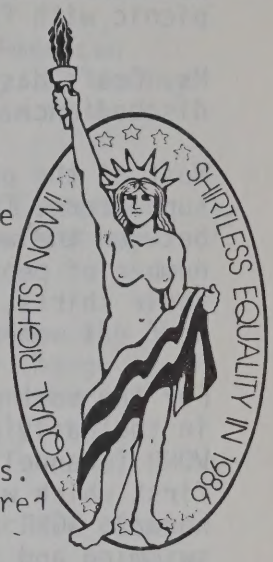
NATURIST ROCHESTER NEWSLETTER

Volume 4, Number 2 Summer Issue June 1986

Topfree Equality Action



Nine women removed their shirts in Rochester's Cobbs Hill Park on Saturday, June 21, in a challange to the New York State law which requires women, but not men, to cover their chests in public. Seven of the women who refused to put on their shirts when asked by police were issued tickets to appear in City Court on Monday, June 23, for arraignment. Women charged with "Exposure of a Person" were: Kathy Reilly, Ramona Santorelli, Mary Lou Schloss, Deborah Seymour, Elise Tooley and Lynn Zicari, plus Nikki Craft, who came from Wisconsin to support the group.

All women pleaded not guilty at the arraignment. Several of the women will be represented by the Public Defender; others will defend themselves. Most significant was that City Court Judge Herman Walz stated that he will take the case very seriously and that it presents important constitutional issues. No trial date has been set at the time of this writing. The women are prepared to take the case as far as required through the court system.

Contributions to the Topfree Equality legal defense fund are urgently needed to cover court costs. Please make checks payable to: Elise Tooley, 142 Mt. Vernon Ave., Rochester, New York 14620

The women are basing their defense on the equal protection clause of the 14 Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Genesee Vally Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union has offered their support. The Topfree Equality Action was coordinated by Ramona Santorelli, who acted as primary spokesperson.

The evening before the action Nikki Craft, nationally known anti-pornography and topfree equality activist, presented a slide show entitled, "In Defense of Disobedience: A Response to Pornography and Violence Against Women". She developed the relationship between exploitation of women by the media, particularly the porn industry, and many peoples attitudes toward women's bodies. The point was made clear by the group's reaction to slides showing men posing in suggestive positions usually reserved for women in advertising. An example

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National Nude Weekend

National Nude Weekend, an annual event since 1976, will be celebrated July 11 - 13. National Nude Weekend provides an opportunity for naturists to express pride in our clothing-optional lifestyle and to introduce others to its freedom and healthful benefits. This should result in greater acceptance and appreciation by the general public.

Events in Rochester will begin with a well publicized open house and information meeting at the Schloss home, 237 Vasser St., at 8 pm on Friday, July 11. The swimming pool, sauna and whirlpool spa will be open. The Naturist Society's "Skinnydipping" video tape will be shown. Information on local and national organizations and clothing-optional and nudist sites and activities will be available. Experienced naturists are encouraged to attend to talk and set an appropriate tone for interested new people.

Steph's Pond will be the focus of activities on Saturday and Sunday. The weekend will feature special activities for children, the annual meeting of the Rochester Naturist Society (ASA), pot luck meals for those interested and lots of volleyball.

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Topfree Equality Action (con't)

of the use of women as sex objects is the New York State law which allows women to be shirtless in a bar to sell drinks to men while at the same time outlawing a topfree picnic with family and friends.

Ms. Craft has been arrested 42 times in anti-pornography and topfree equality civil disobedience. Fifty-eight people attended this presentation.

Most of the people at the Friday meeting and many others attended the topfree action as supporters. They encircled the women planning to remove their shirts as a human barrier between the women and the voyeurs who came for the show. As the action progressed, a number of people clearly changed from observers to supporters. After the women removed their shirts, some men remarked, "What's the big deal?" - an example of the ho-hum reaction to r eal women's chests as opposed to the reaction to suggestive advertising.

For the most part, the reaction of the press was supportive. There were positive editorials in the daily papers which helped to develope understanding of the issues behind the action. WOKR (Channel 13) included lengthy full frontal views in their coverage of the action, a first which will help people to accept the appearance of women's breasts in public as normal. WOKR also showed clips from fifty year old newsreels in which men wore tops when swimming and sunning.

Radio stations from San Francisco, Phoenix, Chicago and New York City called for interviews. The Associated Press and United Press International ran stories as did the Cable News Network and the NBC radio network. Three of the women arrested are scheduled to appear on the Donahue show in a live broadcast on Thursday, June 26, 1986. The topfree action has national importance! It is not only a challenge to a discriminatory New York law but an important educational event as well.

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Rainbow Gathering

Naturist Rochester has received information on The Rainbow Gathering. The Rainbow Gathering is a completely clothing-optional event with workshops and activites for all ages including a "Kid's Village". It is a primitive camping experience. Excerpts from their brochure follow:

> "We invite all beings to gather with us, the Rainbow Family of Living Light, at our 15th annual World Peace and Healing Gathering, July 1-7, 1986. Come share the spirit of peace, love, and truth in Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest. We come together in the Cathedral of Nature to exchange ideas, express opinions, share, teach and learn. This gathering is absolutely free and non-commercial. Caravan and camp with your friends, families, community and/or interest group. Camp with new found friends. Bring all good things. Personal items are a must.'

Naturists who have attended Rainbow Gatherings in the past recommend them highly. It is unusual for the gathering to be held so close to Rochester. People from across the country will attend. Upon arrival at Allegheny National Forest, ask the Forest Service or police for the exact site. Contact Morley Schloss (244-1219) for further information.

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National Nude Weekend (con't)

This year, the National Nude Weekend press release will not mention Steph's Pond. Steph's Pond regulars are encouraged to introduce a friend to the pond on National Nude Weekend. In addition, some people may learn of the pond at the Friday evening meeting.

The theme of National Nude Weekend this year is "Give Us Liberty - Freedom to our still-huddled masses, shrouded in dress-code uniformity."

Annual Meeting
Rochester Naturist Society

The Annual Meeting of Rochester Naturist Society, the local chapter of the American Sunbathing Association (ASA), will be held at Steph's Pond on Saturday, July 12, during National Nude Weekend. The meeting will be held at 2 p.m. - or a little later if a volleyball game is in progress. Rain date is Sunday, July 13.

Tha agenda will include election of officers, selection of delegates to The Eastern Sunbathing Association (ESA) and ASA General Assemblies, discussion of issues facing the organizations, and any other matters of interest to members.

The ESA Convention will be held at Hidden Valley Resort near Atlanta, Georgia, July 30 - August 3. The most important issue facing the ESA is probably a major bylaw change to allow direct election of The Board of Directors and referenda on issues by members. The ASA Convention will be held at Treehouse Fun Ranch near Los Angeles, California, August 10-17.

The Conventions are always lots of fun with social and sports activities for all ages.

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Naturist Society

The Naturist Society grew out of the clothing-optional beach struggles of the late '70's - publishing newspapers giving coverage of the legal battles and directions to secluded skinny-dipping sites. In the early 1980's they created a network of local naturist contacts to whom interested persons could write for more information. (This is how Naturist Rochester was born.)

Today, The Naturist Society is an important force in the promotion of clothing optional recreation. It is providing active support to our Topfree Equality action.

The Naturist Society publishes the World Guide to Nude Beaches and Recreation and the beautiful, quarterly magazine, Clothed With the Sun (CWS). CWS has articles of interest to naturists and site updates. A subscription to CWS is included with membership ($25/year).

Please join or renew your membership in The Naturist Society through Naturist Rochester as the local chapter keeps $5 of every membership placed through it. See Morley Schloss at Steph's Pond or contact him at 237 Vassar St. (244-1219) to join or renew your membership. Please make checks payable to him.

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Steph's Pond News

The latest addition to facilities at Steph's Pond is a large tent next to the volleyball court. The tent will provide shelter from showers.

NATURIST EVENTS CALENDAR

July 1 - 7	Rainbow Gathering Allegheny National Forest, PA
Friday, July 4	Canuding on the Delaware Milford, PA (see last issue)
July 11 - 13	National Nude Weekend
Friday, July 11	Open House and Information Meeting 237 Vasser Street 8 p.m.
July 12 - 13	Activities at Steph's Pond
Saturday, July 12	Rochester Naturist Society Annual Meeting Steph's Pond 2 p.m.
July 30 - August 3	ESA Annual Convention Hidden Valley, Dawsonville, GA
August 10 - 17	ASA Annual Convention Treehouse Fun Ranch Devore, California

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To submit articles for publication, to subscribe or renew your subscription to the Naturist Rochester Newsletter, contact Morley Schloss, 237 Vassar St., Rochester, NY 14607 (716) 244-1219. If it is time to renew your subscription ($3.00 per year), it will be noted on the mailing label below.

NATURIST ROCHESTER NEWSLETTER
237 Vassar Street
Rochester, New York 14607

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PARTICIPANT
Naturist Leadership Council

0304
Kathie Reilly
643 Highland Avenue
Rochester , NY 14620

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TOPFREE 7 TRIAL

The trial of the Topfree 7 will begin Monday, September 15, in the Hall of Justice. Judge Herman Walz has set aside at least three days for the trial. He has reserved a large courtroom in anticipation of many spectators. Supporters are encouraged to attend.

Many hours of research and writing have gone into preparing briefs which were submitted on August 12. At this time help is needed lining up expert witnesses to testify at the trial. Witnesses are needed to make the following points:

1) Some men's breasts are larger than women's breasts. Men's breasts have similar anatomy.

2) Requiring women but not men to cover their breasts leads to poor self-concept and damage to women's physical and mental health.

3) Requiring women to cover their breasts is a sign of inequality which leads to an obsession with breasts and unhealthy relationships between women and men.

4) Women being topfree will not lead to violence against women.

5) Topfree women are common in other parts of the United States.

If you have leads on experts on any of these topics, please contact Mary Lou Schloss, 237 Vassar St., Rochester, NY 14607 or (716) 244-1219 immediately. Funds are available to bring witnesses from out of town, if necessary.

People can also help by contributing to the legal defense fund. Send checks payable to Topfree 7, to the above address. Although our lawyers are serving pro bono, there will be court costs, the expense of bringing in witnesses and the probability of costly appeals.

Lawyers are David Moss, representing Nikki Craft, Kathie Reilly, Deborah Seymour, Elise Tooley, and Lynn Zicari and Larry Kasparek of the Public Defender's Office representing Ramona Santorelli. Mary Lou Schloss is "pro se", representing herself to allow greater flexibility in presenting evidence. Elaine Espansheid has agreed to represent the women on appeals since David Moss is leaving Rochester in mid-winter.

The Topfree 7 defense will be based upon equal protection of the law (14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution), freedom of expression (First Amendment), and the vagueness of the law.

ESA ADOPTS MAIL BALLOT

The Eastern Sunbathing Association at its annual General Assembly this summer, voted to use a mail ballot to elect its Board of Directors and ASA Trustees and to decide important issues. This will allow all members who so desire to take part in the affairs of the organization. It will free General Assemblies for special interest workshops and for committee meetings to develop issues to present to the membership and to devise strategies to implement policies. Almost all delegates supported the change to mail ballots.

ESA ADOPTS MAIL BALLOT (con't)

ESA members may circulate petitions to nominate individuals for ESA Director and ASA Trustee positions and place issues before the general membership. Details will appear in The Bulletin. One petition now being circulated would replace the royalty pageants, now a part of all conventions with a ceremony recognizing the contributions of individuals. (See Morley Schloss for a copy of the petition.)

Until now three individuals representing the three largest ESA clubs have been able to dictate all ESA decisions. Now all members will have an equal voice. Clubs will no longer elect delegates to General Assemblies; any ESA member may attend and speak. The ESA mail ballot system is a prototype for an ASA mail ballot which should follow as soon as its success is clear.

The Rochester Naturist Society has supported the mail ballot idea for several years. Morley Schloss, who helped develop the new system, has been appointed chairperson of the ESA legislation committee which will oversee its implementation.

TURNER STOKES ELECTED ASA PRESIDENT

Turner Stokes was elected president of the American Sunbathing Association at its annual convention this month. Stokes has been active in legal efforts to open top-free beaches and has lobbied in Washington to protect nudist rights. He has coordinated local chapters of both the Naturist Society and the ASA in the Washington, D.C. area. The election of Stokes is particularly timely since anti-nudity laws are being challenged across the country. Stokes should bring greater cooperation between the national naturist organization. His election was supported by the Rochester Naturist Society.

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